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UNCLAS OTTAWA 001373

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CANADA: RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON AN UNMANDATED
SESSION TO DISCUSS CHR REFORM

REF: STATE 082967

1. (SBU) Poloff discussed the reftel demarche concerning a 2005 Commission on Human Rights (CHR) resolution establishing a five-day working group in Geneva to discuss CHR reform, with Henri-Paul Normandin, Director of the Human Rights Division at Foreign Affairs Canada, on May 5. Normandin stated that the Government of Canada (GoC) would continue to oppose this resolution, as it had in Geneva, when it is considered by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York.

2. (SBU) Continuing, Normandin indicated that the GoC does not share the USG position that all discussion on UN reform must take place in New York. According to Normandin, Canada is not opposed to CHR members meeting in Geneva to discuss this issue, if it were to occur on an informal basis; he recounted that the GoC and EU states tried unsuccessfully to reach a compromise with the Africa Group on this issue at the recently concluded CHR session in Geneva. However, when the Africa Group refused to alter its position, Canada voted against the resolution, since a formal session would entail (among other items) the publication of a post-session report.

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